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THE INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS

ON

PEOPLE AND NATIONS:

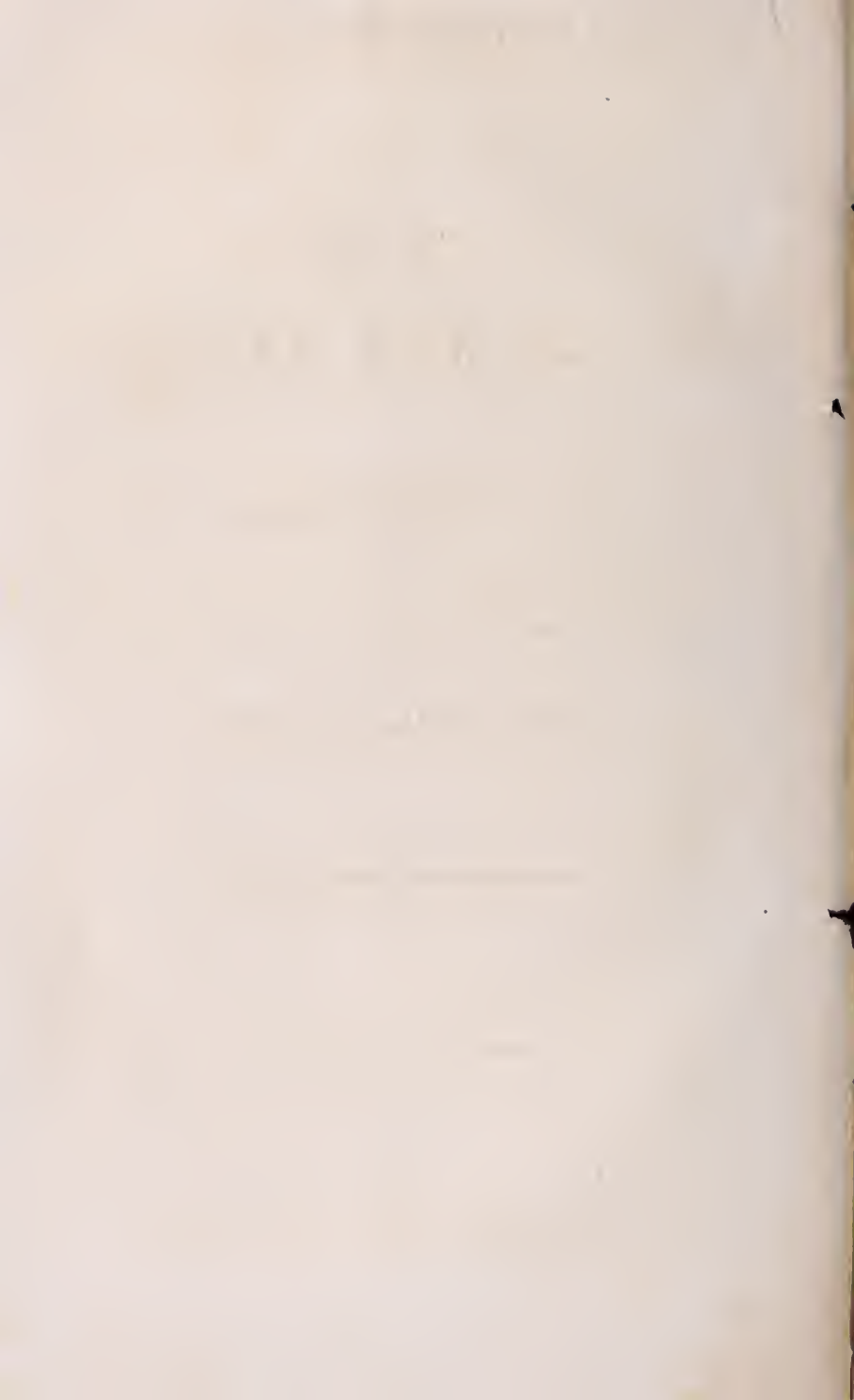
A DISCOURSE

PREACHED BY THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SYNOD OF NASHVILLE, AT THEIR
MEETING IN THE CITY OF NASHVILLE, OCTOBER 4TH, 1854,

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S E R M O N .

ISAIAH XXXV: 1. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Under the figure of a desert covered with vegetation and adorned with flowers, we have, in the text, a prediction of the vocation of the Gentiles, and of the glorious triumphs of the Christian dispensation. Long, indeed, did the nations remain as a bleak and barren desert, without any blossoms of piety or fruits of holiness; but when God's own Son died on the cross, "the just for the unjust," the wilderness and solitary place were made glad.

We use the passage to describe the success of Missions. The grand object of Missions is the conversion to God of a world lying in wickedness. This idea should never be overlooked—never be forgotten. In prosecuting the work to this object, every other must be esteemed subordinate. But, whilst this is true, we think the secular and secondary benefits of Missions are so great and important as to deserve at least an occasional consideration. On this point comparatively little has been written or spoken. Some of these collateral advantages and blessings we intend to discuss in this discourse.

It is true, as it is trite, that this is an age of progress. Silently it may be, but resistlessly onward and onward is man advancing. Past attainments inspire yet more earnest efforts after higher achievements. But although the forces of nature have been impressed and enlisted in the service of man; although the circumference of knowledge has been enlarged, and each segment of the circle more thoroughly mastered; although the fact is patent before every observant eye, that, from the garden of science planted by our ancestors, we are gathering richer clusters of mellow fruit than the ancients in their dreams of the Hesperides ever painted; and although the area of freedom has been increased and the domain of despotism diminished—it is a deplorable fact, that there are multitudes of men and women sunk deep, very deep, in the mire of ignorance and idolatry; on whose benighted minds neither the star of civilization nor of science dawns; on whose hearts the refulgent beams of Christianity have not risen.

You will admit, then, it is a very grave and momentous question—a question which must interest every patriot and philanthropist—by what lever-power shall these millions be raised from the slough of barbarism and moral degradation, and placed on the rock of civil and religious liberty? To this interrogatory we reply, that to civilize the savage nations of the earth, to enlighten and polish the untutored heathen, the dissemination of the Christian religion is incomparably the best instrumentality.

By civilization we understand,* “the conversion or transformation of a country or people from a savage or barbarous state, into a state formed by a due regard to the principles and obligations, the habits and manners of social life,

by the means of mental and moral instruction, salutary laws, and regular government.”

When we survey man in his highest relations, as an intelligent, intellectual creature, exalted above the beasts that perish, created in the image of his Maker, endowed with an immortal soul, accountable for his thoughts, words and actions to the tribunal of Jehovah—we shall at once arrive at the conclusion, that right notions of the duties he owes to God and his fellow-man lie at the very foundation both of individual and national advancement. Incorrect views, either of the relation in which we stand to God or man, must operate injuriously on our system of ethics; and an erroneous morality must necessarily be detrimental to a nation's true prosperity and refinement. But has the nation ever existed which understood and discharged the duties it owed to God and man, without a knowledge of the Christian religion?

Shall we direct your attention to the great Assyrian power—to Babylon—to Media—Persia—Egypt? These godless nations have all vanished, leaving us in their ruins the monuments of their former grandeur.

If we examine the history of Rome we shall find, that during her different governments, of kings, and consuls, and decemvirs, and dictators, and even during the reign of Augustus the demi-god—the leading features of the Roman conquerors, taken as a whole, were an insatiable thirst for renown, and an enthusiastic love of national fame. But, as a people, they were ignorant, superstitious and profligate. They had no deep reverence for truth, no indomitable love of justice and equity, no irrepressible desire to civilize and elevate the human family. To establish on a solid basis the individual rights of man; to raise the masses to their proper level in the scale of social and political existence; to give freedom of thought and freedom of action to the people,

were not the grand conceptions of the Roman government. And what became of their golden Capitol with its brazen gates, their splendid pantheon with its marble walls; their gorgeous temples, their triumphal arches, their forum, their pillars and porticos? What became of these monuments of Roman grandeur and valor and victory? They were trodden down and trampled in the dust by Visi-Goths and Vandals, Huns and Heruli. And a night—a dark, dark night—of indolence and ignorance fell on the mighty nation whose brilliant exploits dazzled the dauntless and terrified the timid.

A glance at Greece will not lead us to a different conclusion. In the days of Alexander, she laid claims to unparalleled wisdom and invincible valor; and was justly regarded as the most cultivated country in the world. But any close observer of their history may perceive that the rulers who imposed wholesome restrictions on their lawless passions, soon sunk into disrepute and forfeited the favor of the populace, whilst those who permitted them to give free scope to their vile sensuality and unbridled appetites, were lauded to the skies as the true patrons of liberty.

What the common people sought was not a republican government, with proper checks and balances, but a lawless democracy. Their aspirations were for freedom from restraint, and to be allowed to pursue, with blind frenzy, their own licentious impulses, caprices and passions. Their civilization was municipal, not grasping the idea of the power of personal existence, and energy, and responsibility; and was incapable of developing the faculties of the individual man. The mild and social virtues were never assiduously cultivated. Avarice, bribery and corruption abounded. There is scarce a black and foul excrecence on the loathsome carcass of sin that was not found in exuberance in Athens. The impure Mythology of Greece: the

libidinous legends and the unblushing allusions of their purest writers to the most revolting vices—all go to prove how deep was their moral degradation, and how very far they were from having attained a high state of civilization and refinement.

And where are now her Attic fountains distilling waters of poetic inspiration? Where her fragrant groves and magnificent temples? Where is the glory of her Parthenon, the pride of her brave sons and beautiful daughters, and the wonder of their posterity? Where is the mother of eloquence, the cradle of song, the home of the Muses? Where are the men of might who once dwelt within the walls of Athens? Where is the voice of genius which was wont to sway her “fierce democracy,” and make the Athenian bosom glow afresh with national enthusiasm? Her deserted groves, her dilapidated temples and mouldering columns, afford a most melancholy illustration of the instability of human governments established on the sliding quicksands of idolatry and polytheism. Says a beautiful writer: “Had the vale of Tempe been the garden of Gethsemane, had Olympus been Calvary, and had the ambiguous responses of the Delphic Oracle been the sure testimony of the Word of God, then had not the swaddling clothes that wrapped her infant liberty so soon have proved its winding sheet.”

The history, both of Greece and Rome, affords proof, we think, of the fact, that reason may rise to the zenith, whilst virtue and morality may at the same time sink to the nadir.

II. Let us, in the second place, briefly advert to the superior adaptation of the Christian religion to civilize, and in the highest degree refine the barbarous and benighted nations of the earth; and to prepare them for the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty.

One of its leading doctrines is, that man is accountable for his conduct to a holy God, at whose judgment bar we must all appear.

We are taught that His All-seeing eye blazes on the inmost soul, and that its every conception, virtuous or vicious, is naked and open before Him. The concentration of all the religious feelings and emotions on one great, powerful and perfect Object, must necessarily produce a most salutary impression on the moral sentiment of any nation or people.

Again, it shows its adaptation to elevate man's social and civil condition when it makes the announcement, that "we have all one Father, and one God created us."

Let the people feel that there is one common ground which all may occupy, without regard to adventitious circumstances, and you inspire all classes with confidence; you give stability to the institutions of the country, and you impart peace, contentment and happiness to its citizens. And just such a platform does Christianity present when it proclaims that—"God has made of one blood all nations:" that we have one common Father, and are all members of the same great family.

Another of its foundation principles is—Love. It inculcates the most enlarged charity—the noblest philanthropy. We are commanded to love the Lord with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." The conspicuous display of God's love to man in the gift of His Son, requiring man's love to God in return, is the flowing fountain from which all the pure streams of charity do emanate. Engraft this principle on the heart of any people, and, in proportion to its growth, will proud domination and lordly oppression hide their diminished heads.

Christianity, moreover, possesses a marvellous compre-

hensiveness. It prescribes, and most powerfully and persuasively inculcates, the relative duties which we owe to each other, to our families and to our country.

Upon each and all temperance, honesty, punctuality, hospitality and courtesy are enjoined. The rich are told that to despise the poor is to reflect on God: "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker." They are commanded to be "ready to distribute and willing to communicate" to the needy. And the poor are exhorted to be contented with their condition. It comes with its kindly admonitions into the family, and charges husbands to love their wives as their own bodies, and wives to submit to their own husbands as unto God; parents not to provoke their children to wrath, and to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; children to love their parents and to obey them in the Lord; masters it commands to give to their servants things just and equal, and to forbear threatening, knowing that their master is in heaven; servants to count their masters worthy of all honor, obedient in all things, not answering again, not purloining their goods, not eye servants, faithful in all things, and to perform all their service under the eye and in the fear of God. It speaks with authoritative voice to the patriot, and orders him to render unto all their dues—honor to whom honor is due—to obey the laws of his country, to respect and pray for magistrates, remembering that civil government is God's ordinance. It recognizes no "higher law." To magistrates it issues its mandate from the King of heaven, to wield the power with which, under God, they are invested, for the punishment of vice and for the promotion of virtue.

Now we enquire, is it possible to conceive or devise any code of laws so well adapted to civilize, cultivate and dignify man as a social creature—so admirably calculated to develop his mental and moral powers, as are the precepts of

Christianity? How vast, how incalculable the benefits and advantages which would accrue to mankind, if they swayed the minds and regulated the conduct of the millions who now sit in heathen darkness, the abject slaves of superstition and idolatry!

Where amongst the writings of sages, or philosophers, or jurists, can the legislator find such correct principles for the ground work of legislation? Where can the masses find such wholesome admonitions—inducing them on the one hand to entertain a high respect for law and order, and on the other, to repudiate the idea of slavish cringing to unrighteous power?

Such teachings of charity, honesty, benevolence and beneficence; such sound philosophy, pure morality, magnanimous philanthropy as are found in the Gospel of Christ are, unquestionably, opposed to ignorance, selfishness and licentiousness—to every species of injustice, fraud and speculation. Where such principles prevail, man will not attempt to usurp the rights of his fellow-man, or trample on the privileges of his neighbor. No: under its benign influence the rights of the poor man in his log shanty shall be respected and protected, as well as those of the rich man in his splendid mansion. Let the principles of our holy religion spread and flourish, and they shall become the best palladium of individual rights, and the peaceful panoply of civil liberty. “The religion,” says De Tocqueville, “which declares that all are equal in the sight of God, will not refuse to acknowledge that all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law.” The precepts of Christianity sweep away the distinctions of *caste*, which are the greatest barrier to the civilization and evangelization of myriads of heathen. The glorious Gospel of Christ neither pampers nor fosters hereditary privileges. It prostrates the proud pretensions of the few who would lord it over the many. It checks

the haughty assumption of the great—it prevents the servile submission of the lowly. It raises to their proper position the poor and penniless populace. It tells them they have rights—heaven-constituted rights and immunities—which appertain to them as creatures of the same Creator and the progeny of the same progenitor; rights which riches do not confer, and which power must not alienate. It proclaims to the prince on his throne, that the beggar at his gate is his brother.

So broad and expansive are the principles of Christianity, that there is no man so exalted as to be beyond their control—none so despicable as to be below their influence. They extend to the degraded inhabitants of Greenland, as well as to the citizens of proud Britain; to the benighted African, as well as to the enlightened American. Compared with the glorious privileges which the Gospel bestows, how insignificant and absurd appear the escutcheons of a titled aristocracy—their tinctures of argent, and azure, and sanguine, and sable; their bucklers and banners; their mitres and mantlings! The man who loves and fears the Lord has graven on his heart the heraldry of the court of heaven. He belongs to the commonwealth of Israel. He is a fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God. He is a joint heir with Jehovah's Son. He shall occupy a throne, and through the cycles of eternity wear a glorious crown.

These views have been fully sustained by the ablest statesmen and the most learned jurists.

“The history of Europe,” says Chancellor Kent in his Commentary, “during the earlier periods of modern history, abounds with interesting and strong cases to show the authority of revelation over turbulent princes and fierce warriors, and the effect of that authority in meliorating manners, checking violence, and introducing a system of morals which inculcated peace, moderation and justice.”

The eminent judge, Sir Allen Park, said: "We live in the midst of blessings till we are utterly insensible to their greatness, and of our civilization, our arts, our freedom, our laws, and forget entirely how much is due to Christianity. Blot Christianity out of the pages of man's history, and what would his laws have been—what his civilization?..... Not a law that does not owe its truth and gentleness to Christianity—not a custom which cannot be traced in all its holy, healthful parts to the Gospel."

The illustrious Montesquieu, whom Burke characterizes as a man "with Herculean robustness of mind," in his *Spirit of Laws*, remarks: "The principles of Christianity deeply engraven upon the heart, would be infinitely more powerful than the false honor of monarchies, the human virtue of republics, and the servile fear of despotic states."

And, in his oration on the occasion of laying the corner stone of the extension of the Capitol, our own Webster said: "Let the religious element in man's nature be neglected; let him be influenced by no higher motives than low self-interest and subject to no other restraint than the civil authority, and he becomes the creature of selfish passions and base fanaticism. On the other hand, the cultivation of religious sentiment represses licentiousness, incites to general benevolence, and a practical acknowledgement of the brotherhood of man, inspires respect for law and order, and gives strength to the whole social fabric, at the same time that it conducts the human soul upward to the author of its being."

And, after all our advantages as a people, after our large, extensive and satisfactory experiment of self-government, tear up the Bible, the magna charta of American liberty, make bonfires of the Book of God, raze to their foundations, in every city and town and hamlet, the houses dedicated to the service of Jehovah, seal the tongues and close the lips of the ambassadors of Christ, let the cause of the

Redeemer be no longer advocated, let the name of Jesus be no longer heard on the lips of our fathers, our statesmen and governors, and what, with all our boasted civilization and refinement, would be the result? The hand of despotism would scotch the wheels of the car of freedom, anarchy would take the place of order, vice would usurp the throne of virtue, the potentate of revolted angels would become the prince of rebel man, and our country would become a wide field of radicalism and lawless oppression, of bloodshed and rapine. Exclude the Gospel from these United States, and soon, by the morbid dilutation of the artery of democracy, shall there be formed on the aorta of the body politic, a tumor which, whilst it enlarges, shall close up the healthful channels through which flows the life-blood of liberty.

De Tocqueville, in his work on the Democracy of America, says: "It is easy to show how much the success of the democratic republic in the United States is due to the religious feeling of the people. . . . As long as Americans shall preserve the severity of their moral conduct, they will preserve the democratic republic."

The immortal Washington, on resigning the Presidency, said: "Reason and experience forbid us to expect that morality or political prosperity can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." And the honorable Simon Greenleaf, one of the ablest jurists our country has produced, remarked: "Amid the fluctuations to which all governments are exposed, and especially ours, with a population many of whom are unaccustomed to liberty, and but faintly imbued with Bible truths, the Word of God is the only anchor of safety. In proportion as men feel the restraints of religion derived from this source, the coercion of government becomes less necessary, and liberty may be more fully enjoyed. Men may be permitted to do as they please,

only so far as they are pleased to govern themselves by the precepts of Christianity. If we would extend the blessings of free government to other nations, it is the Bible alone that can prepare them to receive it—the Bible opened wide to the people by Protestant hands. For it is this alone that exhibits the true and vital principle of free government—I mean the inseparable union of liberty with law.”

III. We advance a step further. We proceed from the probable to the actual. Having noticed what Christianity is capable of doing, we shall attempt, in the third place, to show what it has really accomplished.

We assume the position, that the history of Missions affords a most cogent proof and convincing illustration of the power of Christianity to civilize and polish the most barbarous and benighted nations and people.

Take, for instance, the Sandwich Islands. Their early history exhibits them as a people the most savage, degraded and cruel—as a race of cannibals immolating to their gods human victims, recklessly perpetrating the worst crimes—incest, polygamy and murder.

In the year 1819, Bingham and Thurston took their departure as missionaries to these Islands.* In six years after their arrival, one of their princes might have been seen making a tour through his dominion to enquire into the moral state of his subjects, accompanied by a missionary of the cross and a hundred followers—a sort of peripatetic academy—carrying with them their spelling books and slates, and the prince acting as a nursing father to the infant church, exhorting his people and leading in their prayer meetings. Within about eleven years after the establishment of the Mission, spacious and costly churches were erected, fifty thousand scholars were under the

*See Chowles on Missions : also Bib. Rep., Vol. xx. p. 505, &c.

influence of Christian teachers; temperance societies were constituted; stringent laws were enacted and rigidly executed against incest, polygamy and other flagrant vices to which the natives were addicted; and prayer meetings were regularly attended by thousands of mothers who had in their younger days buried their offspring alive. In 1839, during the great revival, nearly eleven thousand members were added to the churches. In 1840, in these Islands where the will of ignorant and cruel despots had been for ages, the supreme law, and where the club and lance were the instruments of its execution—a constitution was adopted, in which the authority of the Word of God was acknowledged, and protection guaranteed to all forms of worship. The Islands were placed under four governors, to whom were assigned their respective districts, and the kings and chiefs, together with the representatives of the people, were to form a General Assembly for legislation.

If we had no other illustration, is not the sketch which we have just presented a sufficient proof of the correctness of our position? See the cloud of barbarism which so long brooded over these beautiful Islands dissipated by the bright beams of the Gospel! Behold the blood-thirsty warriors laying down their clubs—beating their spears into pruning hooks, and sitting as disciples at the feet of the missionaries of the cross! See the loathsome anthropophagi now the meek followers of the lowly Jesus! Behold their beautiful coral churches, erected at the cost of tens of thousands of dollars, raising their domes to heaven and crowded with devout worshippers! Mark the astonishing change in their social relations—prostitution punished, polygamy abolished, conjugal bands respected, children educated, knowledge disseminated, arts cultivated, temperance societies established, God's sabbath consecrated, serfs made citizens and enjoying the sweets of liberty, and

say, is not Christianity the civilizer, refiner and elevator of man ?

The history of Missions in New Zealand affords another striking exemplification. When Mr. Leigh arrived there in 1822, the country was distracted by the most cruel and sanguinary wars.* One of the chiefs to whom he was introduced, boasted of having quaffed the blood of a rival chief-tain, and one of their priests directed his attention to the bones of a young woman whom he had killed for disobeying his order, and given to his men, who had devoured her near the place where the bones were strewed.

“God only knows,” says another Missionary, “what were my feelings when I saw a human being laid at length, and roasting between two logs which they had drawn together for the purpose.” Female infanticide was not only common, but some of their respectable women spoke of it with apparent satisfaction. And now their barbarous customs, cruel rites and cannibalism are abolished, and in their stead the humanizing and hallowed influences of Christianity are felt. A minister who has lately returned from a tour among them remarked at a Missionary meeting in England: “The New Zealanders are interesting, both as Christians and as men,† and several of the chiefs with whom I conversed, displayed great mental power and have a fair share of religious knowledge.” “The Islands of New Zealand,”‡ says Sir George Grey, “which no foreigner could approach with safety, have become, *by the benign influence of Christian Missionaries, without the aid of arms, or any other of the usual means by which barbarous countries have been acquired, a valuable dependency of Great Britain.*”

*Chowles on Missions, Vol. 2, p. 185.

†Presbyterian, Aug. 19, 1854.

‡Ibid, Sept. 9, 1854.

Do not such facts as these give a triumphant refutation to the false philosophy which maintains "that to make revelation precede civilization in the order of time, is no less absurd than to pretend to unfold to a child the Principia of Newton before he is made acquainted with the letters of the alphabet" ?

The influence of Missions in China presents, we think, another illustration. In 1807 the first missionary arrived in that mighty empire, among a people extremely vile and disgustingly polluted—liars, thieves, polygamists and infant killers. Seven years after his arrival, the New Testament was translated, and two thousand copies printed. Soon, numerous tracts and religious books were largely circulated.

About twenty-three years since, a young man of sixteen,* remarkable for his talents and attainments, while on a visit at Canton, received a religious tract from "a man with large sleeves and long beard." The "Good Words Exhorting the Age" were read by the lad and laid on his shelf. Four years elapsed, and when convalescing after a severe illness, the tract was re-read. Its truth filled the soul of HUNG with remorse for sin, and the heathen youth wrote: "Besides the God of heaven, there is no God. Our dependence is on the full atonement of Jesus." "While he was musing, the fire burned." He did not long hide the truth in his heart. Like a true reformer, he proclaimed the precious doctrine. It gained converts. Idolaters became iconoclasts. Images were broken; false gods "cast to the moles and bats." The government apprehended danger. The new religionists were arrested, persecuted, and two of them in consequence died. The slumbering minds of the celestials were awakened: apathy was exchanged for action. Thousands sympathized, and ten thousand glittering swords

*See *Biblic. Rep.*, Vol. xxvi. p. 321.

were unsheathed. A revolution was commenced, and the Tartan dynasty began to totter. And now hundreds of thousands of strong men with stout hearts are marching through the empire, accompanied by printers and printing presses, striking off Bibles and religious books. This invincible host are proclaiming their belief in the sovereignty of the only living and true God, and their dependence on His providence for every blessing; recognizing the doctrines of man's depravity; their need of a mediator, and of the influences of the Holy Spirit to change their wicked hearts. Hundreds of thousands of men whose camps are Bethels, whose officers are religious leaders of their respective companies, hundreds of thousands of warriors, many of them—like the soldiers of Cromwell—carrying their Bibles in their bosoms, are banded together, avowedly, for the purpose of extirpating the idolatry and superstitions of centuries, and of exterminating despotism. Hosts of men are battling for the cause of God and liberty.

And to what instrumentality is this wonderful revolution and reformation, in the providence of God, to be traced? To the tract handed the young man in the streets of Canton. In other words, to the vigilance of a Christian Missionary.

Let us for a few minutes turn our attention to India, where, for forty centuries, idolatry and superstition, with all their cruel and degrading accompaniments, held undisputed dominion.

Not more than about thirty-three years have elapsed since missions have been prosecuted with any degree of efficiency in India. Let us look at what has been accomplished. The *suttee*, which caused the annual immolation of thirty thousand widows, has to a great extent been abolished. Infanticide has been very considerably repressed. Human sacrifices are by law prohibited, and an

agency is established to snatch the unhappy victims from such a terrible doom. The sanguinary association of *Thuggery* has been eradicated, and thus the lives of thousands have been saved. And, what every American citizen will esteem no small advantage, "all natives of India are free to hold their own conscientious opinions in religion, without fear of legal penalties."* Add to this the immense influence on national character of the translation of the whole Bible into ten languages, and the New Testament into five others; the distribution of one hundred millions of pages of Christian literature; one hundred and twelve thousand one hundred and ninety-one native Christians; one thousand eight hundred and twenty schools; seventy-three thousand five hundred and eighty-five Hindu children receiving a Christian education; and have you not an overwhelming demonstration of the beneficial influence which Christian Missions have exerted on the civil and social condition of the degraded heathen?

Contemplate for a moment an epitome of the whole work. O, it is enough to warm the bosom of the patriot, fire the heart of the philanthropist, and thrill with delight the soul of the Christian. Four thousand churches have been established, two hundred and fifty thousand pagans have renounced their idols, three thousand Missionary Schools are in operation, two hundred and fifty thousand scholars are receiving a Christian education, the Word of God has been translated into two hundred dialects, and thirty-two millions of Bibles have been distributed.

These are some of the statistics of a cause which scepticism has pronounced a splendid failure. A failure, indeed! No: the success of Missions is one of the triumphs of the Christian Church.

*Calcutta Review, quoted in South'n Pres., Oct. 21, 1852. Home and Foreign Rec., July, 1854. Lowrie's Manual, pp. 39-54.

" I see her toil, abroad, at home,
 From tropic to the pole,
 Wherever swells a pagan dome
 Or weeps a human soul.
 The sacred fane reflects her flight,
 The soul to Christ is given ;
 And where hung out the pall of night
 Now cluster beams of heaven."

The Banner of the Cross has been unfurled in every quarter of the globe. It has been fanned by the gentle zephyrs of the South, and ruffled by the ruffian blasts of the blustering North. In the Baltic's broad billow its ensanguined folds have been reflected. It has waved over the snow-clad hut of the Greenlander, and fluttered in triumph over the palace of the Eastern prince. In Africa, in India, in China, in the Islands of the South Sea, in the deep recesses of our own forests—East and West, North and South—around it have gathered hosts of faithful adherents.

The self-denying heralds of Immanuel have not essayed to satisfy their consciences by breathing a sickly sentimentalism, and whispering commiseration for a world "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," in the ear of old England, or of progressive Young America. Not bribed by gold, nor enticed by the prospect of worldly honor, not fascinated by the siren song of fame, not cheered by the plaudits of the admiring multitudes, but actuated by a sense of duty and animated by a desire to promote God's glory in endeavoring to save from ruin immortal souls—they have exiled themselves from their native land and estranged themselves from the firesides of their childhood and from the associates of their youth. With admirable moral heroism, not a few of them have marched beyond the confines of Christendom, traversed the trackless ocean, penetrated "the dark places which were full of the

habitations of cruelty," endured the burning heat of the tropics and breasted the chilling blasts of the polar regions. Others of them, men of liberal education, men of decided talents, men of the keenest and most delicate sensibilities, have gone as pioneers of the Gospel into our distant States and Territories. These domestic missionaries are enduring hardness as good soldiers. Many of them are living on small salaries and scanty fare, riding solitary and alone over our immense prairies, wandering through our dense and unpopulated forests, sleeping, occasionally, beneath the shade and shelter of their spreading oaks, swimming creeks and rivers, entering their pulpits with dripping garments, and proclaiming God's truth with shivering frames: toiling and laboring and praying that sinners may see the error of their ways and embrace the glorious gospel of the blessed Savior.

And now, are we not, each and all, prepared to admit, that this cause has weighty claims upon us—claims which no Christian, nay, which no lover of the human family will for a moment dispute—if we consider not only the great work which has been performed, but also the wide field which remains to be cultivated?

Within the bounds of our own immense territory, containing three and a-half millions of square miles, there are one hundred and forty-six thousand Aborigines, a very large majority of whom are ignorant, savage and degraded. To these heathen at home, it is, undoubtedly, our duty to send the Gospel.

Into California thousands of Chinese are ^{im}emigrating, and amongst them there are a few who, in their own land, embraced the religion of Christ. In San Francisco a Mission house has been erected, a church organized, and a minister acquainted with their language is laboring among them with an encouraging prospect of success.

Besides these, there are myriads of men, women and children flocking to our shores from every quarter of the globe, many of whom are exceedingly ignorant, uneducated, bigoted and superstitious. We bid them welcome. It is the genius of our republican government to bid the stranger, the homeless, the friendless welcome. Thank God, we have room enough, work enough, food enough, aye, and freedom enough for them all. But it is our privilege and our bounden duty as Christians—as Presbyterians who believe that the Bible is the bulwark of civil liberty, as well as “the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God and enjoy Him forever,” it is our duty—to provide for them moral and religious instruction: to put the Word of God into their hands and send the living missionary to their homes. Do this—give these multitudes the Gospel of Christ, impress its vital truths on their consciences and hearts, and you will accomplish more politically, as well as morally, for our country than you could possibly achieve by rigid municipal laws and vigilant city police, or by building court-houses, jails and penitentiaries.

But look abroad; for charity, though she begins her work at home, never finishes at her own fireside. Cast your eye over the world. Array before your imagination six hundred millions of pagans, one hundred and twenty millions of Mahomedans, and five millions of Jews, living without any well grounded hope of heaven through the atoning blood of Christ, and are you not prepared, without a moment's hesitation, to admit that this great work of a world's evangelization has high and holy claims on us as patriots, philanthropists and Christians?

Further, this noble, God-like work has paramount claims on us as Christians who profess to feel the love of Christ constraining us, in view of its future career and glorious destiny.

The preaching of the cross of Christ is the grand instrumentality ordained by God for the reconciliation of a lost world to His favor. In the Scriptures we read, that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God;" that "Christ shall have the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession;" that "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

Brethren, the work of Missions is not an enterprise to be prosecuted or abandoned at discretion. It is no work of supererogation for the performance of which we may, as a Church, accumulate a stock of merit. So intimately blended, so interwoven its warp and woof, with the fabric of Christianity, that to refuse to co-operate is a virtual infringement of the command of Christ, and a renunciation of one of the great privileges of discipleship. Christianity is the religion of man; it is adapted to the wants of the whole human family, and its object is to bring the nations of the earth under the spiritual dominion of Christ, their Sovereign Lord. It aims to unite continent to continent, island to island, ocean to ocean, empire to empire, until all the nations of the earth shall be gathered into one fold and acknowledge one Shepherd.

It is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which shall smite the images of idolatry, and break in pieces the false gods; and whilst the monstrous superstitions of heathendom are scattered on the wings of the wind, like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, the stone shall roll on, roll on, still accumulating until it shall become a great mountain and fill the globe. It is like the streamlet which Ezekiel saw, bursting from beneath the threshold of the sanctuary, deepening and deepening its channel until it became an unfordable river, and gave verdure to the trees on its margin, healed the impurity of the streams with

which it commingled, and imparted new life to the creatures by which it was inhabited. So, in like manner, shall the Gospel—the river of life—flow on, deepening and widening its channel until, with healthful power and restorative energy, it shall cover the waste and desolate places of the earth, invest the wilderness with beauty, fructify the barren desert, and cause it to blossom with the freshness and verdure of Eden.

For the accomplishment of the glorious things spoken of Zion, *we want more men, and we want more means.*

The following resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at its last meeting :

“ That the Assembly would recommend this whole subject of ~~our~~ increase, both of missionaries and missionary funds, to the careful and prayerful consideration of the pastors and sessions of all our churches, that they may adopt such measures as, in their judgment, will best secure the attention, awaken the Christian sympathies, and call forth the cheerful and liberal contributions of all the members of their respective churches.”

From the golden hills of California we hear the Macedonian cry, *Send us more Missionaries.* Through the gorges of the Rocky Mountains, in tones of thunder, we hear it repeated, *Send us more Missionaries.* From pagan India, with its teeming myriads of idolaters, and from the Celestial empire, with three hundred and sixty millions of immortal souls, we hear the cry reiterated, *Send us more Missionaries.*

What shall we do? What answer shall we return? Shall the melancholy monotone proceed from the heart of our Synod, *We have no more men—no more means?*

O, no, brethren : no. Then what shall we do?

First, we must pray the Lord of the harvest that he may send forth more laborers, and that he may crown the

labors of those who are now working in his vineyard, with more abundant success. The great want of the Church is more prayer, more prayer for Missions, more prayer for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Not a formal, casual, incidental mention of Missions in the service of the sanctuary on Sabbath mornings, but warm, ardent prayers in view of the awful condition of a world lying in wickedness. Fervent prayers uttered in the house of God and preferred at the family altar in the hearing of our children, that the Lord may take our Isaacs and Samuels and make them ministers of Jesus; ardent prayers in our closets, too, when none but God hears, that we may ourselves imbibe more of the spirit of our Master—more of a Missionary spirit. Such prayers we need, from grateful, humble hearts, in our pulpits, in our families, in our closets, that the Lord will cause the influences of the Holy Ghost to descend in copious, reviving showers on our fields of Missions; cheering the drooping hearts of our beloved brethren in their arduous and self-denying work, and permitting them to behold the forest changed into a fruitful field.

Secondly: To carry on the Missionary enterprise vigorously, *we want more means*. The beneficence of a Church, or of an individual, has a direct and a reflex influence. The withholding of a liberal portion of the goods with which God has blessed us from His service is productive of a two-fold evil. It retards the progress of the Gospel at home and abroad, and it provokes Jehovah to withhold from ourselves the affluent effusions of His grace and Spirit. "He which soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly." "He that watereth others shall be watered also himself." "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of

heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

And what have we done, as a Synod, for the cause of Missions? What has been the amount of our liberality individually?

According to the reports in the Minutes of the General Assembly, we contributed during the last ecclesiastical year *two thousand six hundred and sixty dollars* for Home and Foreign Missions. We have *two thousand eight hundred and twenty-four* white communicants. If we estimate our congregations at double the number of communicants, then each member of our congregations contributed, on an average, a little over *forty-seven cents*. *Not even a cent a week from each member of the Presbyterian congregations belonging to the wealthy Synod of Nashville!* The measure of our responsibility is the measure of our ability.

We have forty-eight Churches within our bounds, twenty-one of which have not reported a dollar paid to the Board of Domestic Missions, and thirty-two of the forty-eight have not reported one cent paid to the Board of Foreign Missions! Brethren, can we with these facts staring us in the face, say before God, “We have done what we could”? If we feel we are verily guilty—if we feel that “we have robbed God,” let the liberality of this hour compensate, in some degree, for past defalcations.

It was a grand sight to which the eye of the philanthropist was directed a few years since. Melancholy and mysterious as was the dispensation of Providence to the sufferers, it was an arrangement which admirably exhibited to the world how fully and freely sympathy flows through the great heart of America, and how liberally and copiously its leaping, sparkling streams gush forth and fertilize and replenish the sterile and parched places of the earth—when every bosom responded to the wail of wo whose plaintive

tones proceeded from Erin's isle. O, it was something sufficient to cause the heart of the misanthrope to throb with emotions of charity, to behold the citizens of this richly blest and highly favored land, not merely, like the reapers of Boaz, scattering "with charitable stealth the liberal handful," that the perishing poor who had come to our country might glean in our golden fields, but unlocking your barns, and opening wide your granaries, and lading your vessels with the finest of your wheat and corn, and converting the man-of-war into a store ship freighted with food for a famishing people.

Who can describe the gratitude which the poor sufferers felt; who can clothe with words of burning eloquence the cordial thanks which proceeded from the stammering lips and faltering tongues of the pale and emaciated victims who were snatched from a lingering death by your bounty? O, methinks I hear them—their hands clasped and their eyes upturned towards heaven—exclaiming: "Americans, we thank you: 'every drop of blood in our veins thanks you.'"

But imagination presents vividly before the eye of the Christian minister, when he advocates the cause of Missions, a more heart-rending picture than that which Ireland exhibited, when gaunt and meagre famine glazed the eye and sunk the cheek and palsied the limbs, and made the once sturdy frames of her stalwart peasantry lean, lank and painfully erect. On the shores of heathendom, strewn on her scorching sands, covering her wild solitudes, we see not thousands but millions of our fellow-beings, having the same blood coursing their veins, proceeding from the same primeval stock and stamped with the same Divine image, perishing for the want of the bread of life. They have no knowledge of revealed religion, no idea of the true God, no friend to lead them in the narrow way of life, no hand

to point them to the Lamb whose sacrifice is sufficient to atone for a world's transgressions, no tongue to tell them the story of the cross—millions, millions there are in unbroken succession marching down to perdition.

And will not you, who evinced your compassion for, and gave substantial demonstration of your sympathy with, the famishing sons and daughters of Ireland—will not you manifest your sympathy for the perishing heathen? You, who at the bidding of humanity, helped to feed a fainting nation with the bread that perisheth, will you not, at the bidding of God, deny yourselves to send the bread of life to a dying world? You, who to-day have been feasting at the Master's table, enjoying the bounties of His Providence and the riches of His grace; you, who have heard Him at the sacramental board, saying: "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink ^{bountifully} bountifully, O beloved;" you, who would not exchange the heavenly manna for this world's wealth; you, who would not barter the privilege of bathing your weary souls in the living streams that flow from Judah's fount for the diadems of princes; you, who are ready to say, rather than let the Gospel be torn from my heart, let the flesh be torn from my bones—rather than resign my title to the blood of Christ, let my blood by the hand of persecution freely flow—O, can you, will you refuse to contribute liberally, largely, bountifully, for the spread of that religion which, like a sheet-anchor, is the sinking sinner's last refuge, and which links, indissolubly, the immortal soul to the imperishable foundation of heaven's inner temple?

We appeal to you as patriots who profess to bind to your consciences and to twine, with three-fold chord, the principles of freedom around your affections. We appeal to you as Southern men and Western men, to whom God has given a goodly heritage. We appeal to you, on whom Jehovah Jesus has bestowed much of this world's goods,

and to whom He says, the gold and the silver and the cattle on a thousand hills are mine, freely have ye received, freely give. We appeal to the citizens of Nashville, remarkable for their benevolence and munificence. We appeal to the Presbyterians of this city, who have been so long and so highly blessed by the ministrations of your beloved pastors. We appeal to you, ministers of the Gospel, who, though your income be comparatively a pittance, will not withhold the tithes and offerings. We appeal to you, Elders of the Church, who are the honored standard bearers of our beloved Zion, and who are expected to be examples to your respective congregations. In the name of humanity, in the name of philanthropy, in the name of patriotism, in the name of our holy religion, in the sacred name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—as you value the disenthralment, the redemption and eternal salvation of a lost world, in the presence of an All-seeing God, cast your contributions freely, liberally, cordially, prayerfully, into the treasury of the Lord.

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Guidelines For Today's Ministry

Commencement Address



FRANCIS E. KEARNS

Resident Bishop

Ohio-East Area

Methodist Church

7

May, 1966

GUIDELINES FOR TODAY'S MINISTRY

The guidelines for today's ministry which I would lift before you on this significant day are those given by Paul in the fourth chapter of II Corinthians. They are really Paul's testimony as to the guidelines in his own ministry. We are strengthened and inspired in our ministry when we gain insights into the experiences of another whose witness was both relevant and compelling in the day in which he lived.

The first guideline comes from these words, "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord." This testimony is true to the faith of the first-Century Christians who were a community of believers in worship, in study, in witness and in service and who declared their faith with the affirmation "Jesus Christ is Lord."

He is Lord of our individual lives. Man has been created in and through and for Christ. He is Lord over all the areas of our lives—our thoughts, our desires, our ambitions, our decisions, our purposes. At all times and in all places he demands willing and complete obedience.

He is Lord of creation. The Lordship and sovereignty of Jesus Christ are clearly set forth in Colossians 1:15-20. This passage lifts up the centrality of Christ both in the universe and in the church. He is "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created . . . all things were created through and for him." The emphasis upon "all things" repudiates the thought of a fundamental division between the sacred and the secular. Matter and spirit alike are of divine origin. As a theological student I remember that I was somewhat shocked when Bishop McConnell said that "Christianity is the most materialistic religion in the world." As I thought about it I realized that what he was saying was that Christianity emphasizes the world of creation in which matter has sacramental meaning. Here we have a basis for Bonhoeffer's accent upon "the holy worldliness of the church."

Our tendency has been to relocate the church, not only

in the suburbs, but, what is even worse, we have removed it from the world and from our culture. Our separation has been so great that we tend to become "commuters" between the church and the world.

By placing a higher value on the sacred and a lower value on the secular we have even encouraged a division within the church itself. There are two grades of citizens in the church—the laity and the clergy. Too often the laity have become second class citizens whose responsibility is to assist the minister in performing the less important tasks within the life of the church. Many of you will be ordained elders in the near future. You will be ordained, not to a special order of priests, but to a specific function of ministry in the Christian community. Your primary task through your preaching and teaching will be "to equip the saints for the work of ministry." There are divisions of function in the body of Christ, but there is no place for distinctions of status. The "call" is for every Christian to participate in the priesthood, in the ministry of Christ. "Every shoemaker can be a priest of God and stick to his own last while he does it," said Martin Luther.

Another result of the separation of the sacred and the secular has been an increasing pre-occupation of churchmen with the institutional church to the neglect of their Christian responsibilities in the world.

A young Japanese theologian referred to our approach as "removing fish from a dirty river, called the world, and placing them in a clean pool called the church." Both the church and the world are God's creation. The church is in the world and the world is in the church. We are the church at home, at work, in the voting booth, at the union meeting, at the employer's meeting, in our recreation. In the incarnation God stood alongside of us in the world. As followers of Christ who was the incarnation of God we are to live in the midst of the world to minister to the world. We need to take seriously the prayer of our Lord, "I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one." We are not saved from the world. Rather we are saved in the world. In our ministry we are to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Lord of all creation.

A second guideline for ministry is revealed in these words, "With ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." Paul was a grateful servant of Christ which made him a willing servant of God's people. His desire to be a humble servant was created in him by the living Christ who, instead of aspiring to a higher status, emptied himself that he might serve mankind. He did not merely disguise himself as a servant, but he became a servant, subject to all human weaknesses and limitations. He fully identified himself with man. He "humbled himself" meaning that he gave up all personal ambitions, all self-seeking impulses, and surrendered himself without reserve to the will of God. He claimed no rights of his own. His attitude was one of complete submission. Dr. Ernest Scott writes that "the very secret of Christ's nature was his complete unselfishness and it was by this road and no other that he arrived at his sovereign place in the plan of God."

With this lofty example of servanthood in mind, Paul says to the Christians at Corinth, we are "your servants for Jesus' sake." Pastoral care finds its roots in the awareness that all Christians are to be servants. In the Old Testament the priest was the custodian of the nation's religious tradition. To him the people were to turn for understanding and guidance in all problems which involved their relationship to God and to each other.

The prophets are often characterized as those who proclaimed the will of God to the people with peculiar divine authority and sometimes in thunderous accent. But there is also clear indication that they were concerned for individuals.

The Gospels represent Jesus as the great physician and as the good shepherd. People never felt that he was bringing an external judgment upon them, but that he was trying to understand them from within. A significant part of Jesus' pastoral care focused on those who were excluded from the religious community. He did not wait for them to come to him. He went to them and sought for every opportunity to relate himself to them in a meaningful way. Through him the love of God reached out with its reconciling and redeeming power.

In no community can the minister do all that needs to be done in pastoral care. This becomes the responsibility of every

Christian who is a member of the community of faith. It can be truly said that no church is fulfilling its nature and its mission unless it is a servant church. A great deal of criticism has been focused upon the modern church at this point. The church has allowed itself to become ingrown until its major concern centers upon itself and its own interests. It is so easy for the church to "imbed itself in the cocoon of irrelevance." The modern church is threatened to become paralyzed by a crippling sense of self-preoccupation. The disease has been referred to as "organization sclerosis—a hardening of its institutional arteries . . ."

The church today is called to be a servant church in the world. God is not "out yonder" or "afar off." God is deeply involved in the struggles, the trials, the testings through which his people are going. He is not alone within the walls of the sanctuary; he is not imprisoned within the pages of the Bible. He is with his people in their severe testings and in their decision making. Toward the end of his life Archbishop Temple said that "he was sure that God was concerned with many things beside religion."

We Christians often have a hard time to be persuaded that God is in the great social struggles of our day. Some laymen cannot understand why their ministers try to relate the gospel to these social struggles through which people are going or why they encourage their lay people to become participants. What are some of these issues? Included would be: the inclusive church, war and peace, civil rights, fair employment practices, fair housing, the rehabilitation of alcoholics, the rehabilitation of criminals. These are all concerns of the servant church dedicated to the will and purpose of God in the community.

To be a servant church in the future we will need a revolutionary modification of our structures. This should not be too difficult for us to accept as Protestants because we do not believe in the infallibility of the church. The institution of the church should always be flexible and look upon itself as a servant of Christ—not an end in itself. This does not mean that we are not going to have any structure. I cannot imagine Christians fulfilling their mission in the world in a totally dis-

ordered fashion. There must be some kind of order for effective witness and service. John Wesley realized the need of purposeful organization to preserve the results of his evangelistic efforts. A careful evaluation of our present structure will enable us to change in the direction of our new understanding of the nature and mission of the church. It will lead us to greater participation in the ecumenical movement through which all of us may enter more fully into that unity which has been given to us in Christ. If we are flexible, we will be led from an institution preoccupied with itself to a servant church in the world.

Dr. George Adams Smith defined a servant as "a person at the disposal of another to carry out his will, to do his work, to represent his interests." A servant church, then, is a church who is at the disposal of her Lord to carry out his will, to do his work and to represent his interests in the world.

A third guideline calls our attention to the message—"the gospel of the glory of Christ" or in Dr. Phillips' translation "the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ." Paul was determined to keep the focus of attention on the gospel as it was disclosed in Jesus Christ. It was far from his wish that he should impress by his personality. It was his deepest desire that the message should convince by its own inspiring truth. His enemies accused him of tampering with the Word of God. Such a charge is not unknown today. It is often used against those who accept the help of modern scholarship in their interpretation of the Scriptures. Paul refused to use the Scriptures as a means of manipulating people to his own ends. His approach to the message was by "the open statement of the truth." He assumed that the Scriptures manifest the truth about God and man and, therefore, correspond with universal human needs and aspirations.

Preaching is primarily kerygmatic—the proclamation of the gospel. The heart of the gospel is the story of a gracious God who reaches out to his erring children in their need and restores the broken relationship in an act of suffering love. Dean Inge reminded us long ago that the gospel is "not good advice but good news." It is a joyous word from God to man in the depths of his existence. The gospel is not merely the proclamation of an idea, but of God's action in history—past, present and future. It is the good news of a terrific force let

loose in history for the redeeming of mankind. This gospel has the power to shatter the heart with wonder and to shake the world with hope.

Of this glorious gospel we are called to be the proclaimers. There is a crying need for such preaching today—not preaching that is brilliant, but proclamation that has about it the ring of reality. Dr. Spike reminds us that “preaching that is rigorously faithful to the central biblical themes of creation, judgment, redemption and resurrection is one of the greatest needs of the American Church.” Dr. Sockman pleads for biblical preaching and says that: “Gripping sermons can start on the sidewalk level where men are living and then lead their thoughts into the biblical uplands of the soul where men are transformed by the renewing of their minds.”

There was an urgency about first century preaching which is quite lacking in our preaching today. The proclamation was charged with reality as the world-changing events in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were recounted. Then was related what had actually happened to the community of believers through the power of his living presence. Dr. Hazelton reminds us that preaching is in the doldrums today; that our mood is largely untouched by the urgency of preaching. Abraham Lincoln once said that he never really enjoyed listening to a preacher until he began acting as though he were fighting bees.

What about our preaching? Is it our aim by clever tricks to manipulate the minds and emotions of people? Are we striving for popularity? Do we feel obligated to impress the people with our profundity? This might pass once in a while. Richard Baxter said that he liked to preach a sermon above the heads of the people once a year to show them that he could do it every Sunday if he wanted to. Do we go into our pulpits to bare our opinions? If so, then we are guilty of what Henry Sloane Coffin called “ecclesiastical nudism.” Bonhoeffer raises a searching question when he asks, “Does not our preaching contain too much our own opinions and convictions and too little of Jesus Christ?”

It would be misleading to give you the impression that the

congregation will be sitting on the edge of the pews every Sunday morning eagerly waiting for your message. A young man came to Dr. Gossip and apologized for missing one of his lectures. He explained that he had to go to preach. Dr. Gossip inquired, "How did you get along?" "Well," the young man replied, "I didn't get along too well; I didn't get very far in the sermon until the congregation froze me up." Dr. Gossip asked him where he had preached. The young man told him. Dr. Gossip smiled and said, "Well, don't worry about that, I preached in that same church thirty years ago and I'm still thawing out."

However, I can assure you that people will be much more responsive to your preaching if you reveal a deep undertone of passion and urgency than they will be if you preach as though what you are saying doesn't matter after all. If we are proclaiming the "glorious gospel of Jesus Christ," then our preaching should have something about it like a knock on the door which calls for attention and which calls for action. We are challenging people for a verdict in their relation to Christ as their Lord.

The fourth guideline is revealed when Paul testifies, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" was a treasure given to Paul which he was to make real through his life and message. Paul was so conscious that this treasure was contained in "a frail vessel of earth." And then he recalled that it was through the humble earthly life and shameful death of Jesus that God had done his revealing and redeeming work.

Redemptive work is always costly for the individual disciple and for the community of believers. There is no hope of ease and comfort for those who are faithful servants of Christ. There is no way for Christians to evade the burden and the heat of the day. Physical weariness, sickness of heart, bitter disappointments, frustration of hopes, the strain of Christlike concern—all these the minister will experience in full measure. Paul, together with the community of believers, knew the deep agony of suffering for Christ. What an eloquent testimony! "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed,

but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed." How real to them must have been "the dark night of the soul." And yet it all had a purpose—"to show that the transcendent power belongs to God."

You will be tempted to be overcome by the magnitude of the task and to be overwhelmed by your own unworthiness. The members of the congregation will not always change as rapidly as you desire that they should. They will drag their feet on some causes which to you are so important for the relevance of the gospel in our day. You will be disappointed to learn that people's attitudes are resistant to change. There will be times when the flags will not be waving and the trumpets will not be blowing. You will find yourself plodding along a road that is steep and rough. You may even wonder at times why you accepted a commission in such a warfare. Then it is that you will be encouraged and strengthened to realize that while your vessel is earthen and frail, the transcendent power belongs to God.

Thomas Chalmers was musing over the problem as to why there were not more spiritual results from his deliriously popular ministry. He came to this conclusion—that he was trusting more to his own animal heat and activity than to the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament God's presence and power were manifested to those who accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and were striving to be his willing servants in the world. God is ready and willing to dwell in us at the deepest levels of our being, cleansing the roots of behavior and purifying the springs of motivation. Such an awareness of his Holy Spirit comes to those who are fully committed to him. As Dr. Thurman says, such commitment is "the yielding of the nerve center of consent." It means that something total within us says "yes" to God.

Paul has given us significant guidelines for our ministry today. We are to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in all creation. We are to be servants of Christ and part of a servant community whose mission is in the world and to the world. We are to proclaim the gospel that men may come to a knowl-

edge of the glory of God disclosed in Jesus Christ. We are to give ourselves to courageous witness and unselfish service so that beyond the earthen vessels men will be aware of the transcendent power of God.

